



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

## New Law Sponsored By Sen. Lanza & Assemb. Reilly will Provide Sandy Ground Historical Museum Much Needed Assistance

ANDREW J. LANZA July 12, 2021



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*“The Sandy Ground Historical Museum’s storied history is a community treasure that deserves to be preserved and promoted. With the signing of this new law, Sandy Ground will have the opportunity to expand its reach and promote the history of this community and the integral role it served in the Underground Railroad. I am grateful to Governor Cuomo for signing this bill into law and am thankful to have worked with Assemblymember Reilly to make this bill a reality,” said Senator Andrew Lanza.*

It was announced that **Governor Andrew Cuomo** had recently signed legislation introduced by **Assemblymember Michael Reilly** (R-Staten Island) and **Senator Andrew Lanza** (R-Staten Island) which would authorize the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (DASNY) to provide financing through grant opportunities to the Sandy Ground Historical Museum.

In 1827, after slavery had been abolished in the State of New York, freemen settled in an area of Richmond County that had been known since colonial times as Sandy Ground. Located today in the Rossville section of Richmond County, Sandy Ground was one of the first documented land purchases by an African-American from the area and remains to be one of the oldest surviving communities in the United States that had been founded by African-Americans prior to the American Civil War. The early settlers of Sandy Ground were skilled in the oyster trade, with their community being within distance of Prince's Bay, the island's main hub for oyster harvesting. From the early to mid-19th century, Sandy Ground served as an important stop on the Underground railroad. Sandy Ground is the oldest continuously settled free black community in the United States, and ten families descended from the original settlers remain in the area today.

"I am pleased to learn that Governor Cuomo has signed the legislation introduced by Senator Lanza and I to unlock expanded public financing opportunities for the Sandy Ground Historical Museum," said **Assemblymember Reilly**. "The museum, as well as the site it sits on, have a storied history that holds not just local importance, but national importance too. With these expanded public financing opportunities available to them, the folks at the Sandy Ground Historical Museum can get to work on making this part of our history more accessible."

"The Sandy Ground Historical Society extends our thanks to our elected officials for providing us with the opportunity to share this little-known part of American history," said

**Sylvia Dalessandro, Executive Director of the Sandy Ground Historical Society.** “We hope that we will be able to provide information on African American history to our teachers, adults, and children. Thank you all for your support!”

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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## 2021-S5991

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- Introduced
  
- - In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
  
- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
  
- - Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
  
- Delivered to Governor
  
- Signed By Governor
  
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Authorizes the dormitory authority to provide financing to the Sandy Ground Historical Museum

March 25, 2021

Signed by Governor

Sponsored by **Andrew J. Lanza**

Do you support this bill?